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ABSTRACT

As school districts, universities, and local education agencies begin to provide induction programs for beginning teachers, there is a growing need to attend to quality and more carefully evaluate such programs to ensure they meet the needs of beginning teachers. This paper specifically addresses the nature of induction programs for secondary social studies teachers. It reviews relevant literature, examines the experiences of three social studies teachers who participated in a year-long induction support program, and suggests unique aspects of being a social studies teacher that calls for support. It addresses the void in the literature about how to support the implementation of standards-based practice in social studies classrooms, specifically to engender sustainable practices that promote democratic citizenship education. Three social studies teachers, from different districts, volunteered to be part of a social studies-specific induction program called Alternative Support for Induction Secondary Teachers (ASIST) for one year. Two taught history in middle school, and one taught freshman geography and study skills. Multiple sources of data provided the opportunity to build case descriptions. Across all three cases, beliefs and practices tended to shift minimally. While it appears that the ASIST program had little impact on the development of their beliefs and practices, the three beginning teachers did attempt some alternative methods and assessments. When they attempted new strategies, lessons tended to be active, but lacking in additional elements related to powerful social studies instruction. Common to all three was an evident confusion about the nature of democratic citizenship education and the definition of inquiry related to it. Contains 33 references.(BT)

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# The Case for Social Studies Induction Programs

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## The Case for Social Studies Induction Programs

It is widely recognized that support systems for beginning teachers are needed to facilitate the process of socialization into the existing school culture (Huling-Austin, 1990, The Holmes Group, 1986; Gold, 1996; Griffin, 1985; Richardson, 1996; Salish I Research Project, 1997). The most frequently stated goals for induction programs are the promotion of professional and personal well-being, improvement of instructional practices, retention, and facilitation in meeting of standards (Huling-Austin, 1990). Researchers have demonstrated the various degrees to which these goals have been met and how induction programs have an impact on the development of beginning teachers. They have been shown to increase retention (Darling-Hammond, 2000), and foster a sense of well-being and support for beginners throughout the induction period (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Huling-Austin, 1990; Luft & Patterson, in press). Preliminary evaluations of one science-specific program have revealed an increased use of inquiry-based practices and the maintenance among beginning secondary science teachers of reform-based beliefs (Luft, Roehrig, & Patterson, in review).

Many teachers do not receive the support they need during their beginning years that would help foster this development. While the National Center for Education Statistics [NCES] (1999) reports that the numbers of beginning teachers who have the opportunity to participate in an induction teacher program is growing (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1998), the quality and impact of most programs is unknown. In a study of induction programs for beginning secondary science and mathematics teachers in Arizona, Luft and Cox (1998) concluded that small districts were less likely to have induction programs than large districts, beginning subject specialist teachers were not being mentored by experienced mentors in their subject areas, and high numbers of beginning teachers were teaching courses in which they did not have a major.

As school districts, universities, and local education agencies begin to provide induction programs for beginning teachers, there is a growing need to attend to quality and more carefully evaluate such programs in order to ensure that they meet the various needs of beginning teachers.

This paper specifically addresses the nature of induction programs for secondary social studies teachers. It reviews relevant induction literature, examines the experiences of three social studies teachers as they participated in a yearlong induction support program, and suggests unique aspects of being a social studies teacher that call for support. It addresses the void in the literature about how to support the implementation of standards-based practice (National Council for the Social Studies, 1994) in social studies classrooms, specifically to engender sustainable practices that promote democratic citizenship education. In approaching this vision, it investigates the nature of induction programs for secondary social studies teachers, while providing valuable information for other induction programs to build upon.

## Literature Review

Initial research on beginning teachers focused on socialization and work environment (Varah, Theune, & Parker, 1986; Veenman, 1984; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). Veenman identified problems most frequently perceived by beginning teachers, including discipline, motivating students, dealing with individual differences, assessing students' work, relationships with parents, and organization of class work. The overwhelming concerns teachers have with discipline and the implications for the design of induction programs have also been documented (Odell, 1986; Stroot et al., 1999). In addition, certain elements such as appropriate course loads, collegial support, mentorship, and alternative evaluation have been found to help ensure the successful socialization of beginning teachers (Huling-Austin, 1992).

Recently, researchers have begun to attend to unique needs beginning teachers have that are beyond the scope of these issues. Gold (1996) expanded upon her earlier focus on socialization, arguing the need for both instructional and personal-psychological support, asserting that effective support is multidimensional. The literature in some disciplines, particularly science education, has documented the even more specialized needs of beginning secondary teachers. Preliminary research in the field of secondary science education argues that, in view of the standards for the field, induction programs for secondary science teachers should be ideological and content-based, as well as sociological (Brockmeyer, 1998; Emmer, 1986; Salish 1 Research Project, 1997). Brockmeyer noted the various needs, beyond the sociological, of first-year science teachers to be: psychological, management-related, logistical, instructional, and philosophical. Science educators have also focused on induction for secondary science teachers in the hopes of addressing shortages and retention problems in all areas of secondary science education. They have thus made the case that science-specific induction programs can improve instruction and help address problems of shortages and retention.

Another area of interest has been the nature and relationship of beliefs and practices of beginning teachers. It has been observed that beginning secondary teachers display a discrepancy between beliefs and practice; specifically, the self-professed theoretical ideology gained through pre-service education typically does not match the teacher's actual classroom practice (Salish I Research Project, 1997). Beginning secondary teachers may identify themselves as student-centered teachers, yet their practice shows a didactic orientation. Fortunately and unfortunately, during the first three years of teaching the beliefs and practices of beginning teachers come into closer alignment (Salish I Research Project, 1997). Carefully configured induction programs are essential in reducing the disparity that beginning teachers hold between beliefs and practices and

in ensuring the implementation of student-centered practices. Some researchers have asserted that the alignment of beliefs and practices in beginning teachers happens more readily during the induction process than during the pre-service period (Salish I Research Project, 1997; Richardson, 1996).

The case for social studies induction programs can be made more for reasons of instructional quality than for retention and recruitment. According to the *Standards for Excellence* (National Council for the Social Studies, 1994), the purpose of social studies education is to promote in students the ability to "make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world." Instruction to these ends should be powerful, defined as active, integrative, value-based, meaningful, and challenging (National Council for the Social Studies, 1993). There is scant research about the status of beginning social studies teachers, and some research that provides a picture of social studies classrooms in general. While there does not appear to be a problem with shortages of social studies teachers (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1998), the literature reveals several concerns related to the status of social studies teachers and classrooms. First, there is a problem with improper placement of social studies teachers. A survey of teachers over the 1993-1994 academic year revealed that over 50% of students in Western Civilization classes were taught by teachers who did not have a degree in history (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1997). Social studies teachers are not teaching without credentials, but are frequently teaching outside their content area.

Secondly, there is a historic concern about the quality of instruction in social studies classrooms (Darling-Hammond, 1990; Wineburg & Wilson, 1988). Early studies showed social studies teachers as didactic in orientation and predictable in their use of teacher-centered

methods. James Leming (1994) has attempted to justify the stereotype of social studies classrooms as thoroughly teacher-centered and lecture-based. He has suggested that the Traditional Social Studies Instruction (TSSI) format of many social studies classrooms is unavoidable and perhaps not even inappropriate. On the other hand, those opposed to TSSI argue that these traditional strategies are in some way undemocratic, that the status quo should be challenged and practices in classrooms should be more student-centered. These researchers suggest that such social studies classrooms are not democratic, in that they are rarely places in which students are asked to think about critical issues (Newmann, 1988) or consistently develop democratic habits of mind (McNeil, 1986).

In short, it appears that social studies instruction in classrooms may not approach established standards-based practices. Leming (1989) has argued that two cultures exist, one comprised of social studies educators and one comprised of social studies teachers. Social studies educators value the importance of rationale-building, while social studies teachers think of this as peripheral. Induction programs offer the promise of helping bridge the gap between these two cultures by helping beginning teachers navigate the transition from preservice to in-service periods. In addition, social studies-based induction programs offer even more promise of meeting the specific needs of beginning social studies teachers.

## Methods

### *Participants*

Three social studies teachers from different districts self-selected to be part of a social studies-specific induction program for one year. Two taught history in middle school, and one taught freshman geography and study skills. This was the first year of teaching for Louis and Leslie. Delia had been a school counselor for three years prior to taking on a social studies

position. None of the three had an assigned mentor. For their participation in the induction program, they received either district or university credit.

*Induction Program*

Alternative Support for Induction Secondary Teachers (ASIST), an induction program for secondary teachers, was developed by university and school district personnel. The beginning teachers in ASIST attended monthly workshops throughout the year that focused on inquiry instruction through such topics as management, planning, instruction, and assessment. They also had an opportunity to attend a regional social studies conference. In addition, participants had unlimited access to experienced social studies teachers. They were observed monthly by staff members and received immediate feedback on their teaching. A more comprehensive discussion of ASIST and its components can be found in Luft and Patterson (in press).

*Research Question and Objective*

The objective of this study was to describe the development of these three beginning social studies teachers in the context of an inquiry-based induction program. The focus was on the beliefs and practices of the beginning social studies teachers as well as how they developed their classroom practices over the first year. It was hoped this research would help inform the future design of discipline-specific programs and reveal the unique needs of beginning social studies teachers. The specific research question guiding this study was "How were the beliefs and practices of beginning social studies teachers impacted while in an induction program?

*Data Sources and Analysis*

Multiple sources of data, such as interviews, observations, surveys, field notes, and artifacts provided the opportunity to build case descriptions (Yin, 1984). The Teachers' Philosophical and Pedagogical Inventory (TPPI) (Richardson & Simmons, 1994), a semi-

structured interview, was administered at the beginning and end of the school year, and was used for collection of data about development of beliefs about teaching and learning of the beginning social studies teachers. The TPPI enabled researchers to identify the ideological orientation of teachers from teacher-centered to student-centered and detect shifts in beliefs about teaching. Data on practices were collected monthly when a project staff member visited the classroom of a beginning teacher. The project staff member collected notes on teacher and student actions in the context of the lesson. As well, participants were surveyed at the beginning and end of the year regarding their expectations for the program, the context in which they were teaching, as well as their concerns for the year.

The interview, questionnaire and observation data were coded, and categories were developed by three project staff (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The codes and categories were then folded into embedded case descriptions (Yin, 1984) of each participant that provided a profile of development of each individual's beliefs and practices over the year and the context in which they taught (Eisenhart, 1989).

## Findings

### *Case Study Summaries*

*Louis.* Louis is a Caucasian male in his second year of teaching, who taught 7$^{th}$ grade American history in a middle class suburban school with a primarily Caucasian student body. Teaching was his second career, after a 25-year career in the military. He used the metaphor of guide at the beginning of the year and drill sergeant at the end of the year to describe his role as a teacher. He believed his students learned best by repetition and memorization. Using inquiry was a challenge for him, such that in implementing an inquiry-based lesson, his main challenge was getting students to ask the "right" questions. Although he used some alternative assessment

strategies such as peer evaluation of projects and rubrics, he believed the best assessment tool was the multiple-choice test. Louis seemed unclear on the distinction between concepts and content, and this had an impact on the way he assessed students. He judged whether or not his students had learned by testing for factual knowledge.

*Leslie.* Leslie was in her first year, a Caucasian woman teaching freshman geography and study skills in a primarily Hispanic, rural high school. She also began with and maintained a strong didactic focus throughout the year, using metaphors to describe her role such as baby-sitter and zookeeper. She believed her students learned best by doing, but encountered many challenges with implementation. Her greatest challenge with student-centered activities was her belief that the students were not capable of solving their own problems. When students had trouble finding information, she was confused about whether or not and how to help them. Much like Louis, while she used some alternative assessment tools modeled in the workshops, she primarily used traditional tests to measure factual knowledge.

*Delia.* Delia was in her first year as a 6$^{th}$ grade social studies teacher. She is a Hispanic woman who taught ancient civilizations in a primarily Hispanic urban middle school. She had worked previously in the same district for three years as the school counselor. Delia used more student-centered strategies than did Louis and Leslie, demonstrating a comparatively more student-centered focus from the beginning. She saw herself as a guide in the more holistic sense of providing support for students beyond the classroom. Her ideas about how students learned focused on students and their actions in the classroom, and she believed students learned in a variety of ways. Although her classroom was more student-centered than the other two beginning teachers', implementing inquiry-based lessons was difficult for her. While she tried several inquiry-based lessons, she was not always sure of the how to design them, in particular how to

create a lesson based on a concept. Conceiving of students as capable of generating and answering their own questions was untenable. By the end of the year she had begun to understand the distinction between facts and concepts, but was still grappling with how to help students engage with larger ideas. After a role-play in which students explored harsh justice of the Greek legal system, she was concerned that allowing them to generate questions related to the concept of justice would degenerate into personal accusations. Of the three, only Delia's ideas about assessment shifted. Delia consistently stated that she observed student interactions to determine when learning was occurring. At the beginning of the year she was more concerned about testing than at the end of year, when she argued for the assessment of students through observation of their interaction.

*Cross-case Comparison*

Across all three cases, beliefs and practices tended to shift little. While it appears that the ASIST program had little impact on the development of their beliefs and practices, all three beginning teachers did attempt some alternative methods and assessments, although conceptual understandings of purposes for such innovations were incomplete. When they did attempt new strategies, the lessons tended to be active but lacking in additional elements related to powerful social studies instruction. In particular, the majority of lessons enacted by all three were conspicuously lacking a values-based focus. At no time were the teachers willing to engage in the discussion of controversial issues or systematic formation of democratic habits of mind. Common to all three cases was an evident confusion about the nature of democratic citizenship education and the definition of inquiry related to it.

In regard to the induction program, ASIST, they all stated the most valuable part of the year was sharing with their peers and the mentor teacher. Interactions occurred during the

Saturday workshops, on-line, or during classroom observations. The beginning teachers also felt they benefited from objective observations and the regional conference attendance. The observations gave them feedback about their teaching that was not provided through the school system, while the regional conference provided lesson plans and curricular materials that could be easily integrated into the classroom.

## Conclusion

Following the progress of these three teachers through a yearlong social studies specific induction program provided a view of their development and allowed for some speculation about the unique needs of beginning social studies teachers. It is disconcerting that this study revealed further examples in support of the conclusion in the literature that beginning social studies teachers' classrooms reinforce the status quo, and that beginning teachers are predictable in their use of traditional strategies. In addition, the study suggests that the support program met some needs more effectively than others. The program appears to have met some of their sociological needs in the form of enhanced collegiality, but may not have influenced their conceptions of social studies or their intentions to reflect on their practice. While the three teachers claimed to have benefited from the program, neither their beliefs nor their practices shifted in the presence of social studies-specific support.

## Implications

While all secondary teachers would benefit by participating in an induction program, beginning social studies teachers need specialized support that addresses their unique pedagogical and content needs and helps promote standards-based practice. If social studies educators are called to promote in beginning teachers the understanding of democratic inquiry as outlined by the national standards, both preservice and in-service programs need to be designed

to these ends. While this support should include the traditional areas that are of frequent concern to beginning teachers, such as classroom management, it should extend to creating more democratic classrooms where students are developing democratic habits of mind by engaging with controversial issues and conducting social inquiry.

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